



LCD TVs

If you want to browse your digital photos, play games and watch television without moving from your armchair, you need an LCD TV. We review 11 beautiful big screens that offer picture-perfect quality for all your entertainment needs from just £699

More and more, PCs are being used for play instead of work. Whether you spend your leisure time playing 3D games, surfing the net or pursuing a hobby such as photography or music, you tend to spend it in front of a PC. For this reason, many of us have a computer in the living room. This is usually where you'll have the TV set, too, which presents an opportunity. The next time you consider upgrading your TV or your PC display, you can buy an LCD TV and do both at once.

Today's widescreen LCD TVs double as pin-sharp PC monitors, making them ideal for showing off digital photos or playing high-resolution 3D

games. Crucially, they're also capable of displaying high-definition TV, the next big thing in broadcasting.

Sky TV recently announced a High Definition TV (HD TV) service starting in 2006, and the BBC says it will be providing high-definition programmes this year. A normal TV signal is made up of 576 lines, while HD TV uses between 720 and 1,080 lines. This makes an HD TV picture far sharper, and you'll see it all in glorious widescreen.

RESOLUTION NOW

So how do you find the perfect display for both television and PC? As a minimum, you should look for the HD Ready certification for HD TV, and a

native resolution of at least 1,280x768 for the PC side of things.

But that's just the beginning. Some HD TV sets have only analogue tuners built in, so you receive just the basic five channels. Some display only the lower HD TV resolutions and don't go up to the full 1,080 lines. Others have all the right specifications, but still don't produce a picture that is as natural and appealing as that of their competitors' screens.

To avoid all these pitfalls, just read on. We've tested 11 of the biggest and best high-definition TVs to help you find the perfect picture at the right price.

IN THIS REVIEW

26-27" LCD TVs

Acer AT2601W
Samsung LE26R51BD
Sony KDL-S26A12U
Toshiba 27WL56

32" LCD TVs

JVC LT-32DS6
Panasonic TX-32LXD52
Samsung LE32R41BD
ViewSonic N3260W

37" LCD TVs

Philips 37PF9830
Sharp LC37GA6E
Toshiba 37WLT58



CHOOSING AN... LCD TV

A High Definition TV may be well within your reach, but when you're spending up to £1,000 you want something that ticks all your boxes. Work out what you want from your LCD TV with the help of our guide

There are several HD TV standards, each of which refers to the level of detail in the broadcast signal. The most common standards are 720p and 1080i. A 720p image consists of 720 horizontal lines. Every time the TV refreshes its image, all these lines are updated. An LCD TV screen designed to display 720p images should have a resolution of at least 1,280x720 pixels.

All 1080i broadcasts use 1,080 horizontal lines. Like a traditional standard-definition TV signal, however, the picture is interlaced. This means the horizontal lines are divided into two sets: the odd-numbered lines and the even-numbered lines. Every time the TV refreshes, only one of these sets of lines is updated. To display a 1080i signal at its best, you'll want a minimum resolution of 1,910x1,080 pixels. Only the most expensive LCD TVs have such a resolution, though. Most of the televisions in this test can accept a 1080i signal but display it on a lower-resolution screen by down-sampling the image.

The Philips 37PF9830 has the highest resolution of the TVs reviewed here. Equipped with a 1,920x1,080 LCD, it can display 1080i signals at their full resolution. It can also display the even smarter (and rarer) 1080p resolution, which updates all 1,080 lines in every frame. While 1080p broadcasts are extremely unlikely in the near future, Sony claims its PlayStation 3 will be able to produce a 1080p signal. For more information on the different types of HDTV and how you can receive them, read *How It Works* on page 236.

What you need to decide before you buy is whether you're happy with a set that can properly display 720p and a scaled-down 1080i, or whether you want a top-quality 1080i/1080p set. For many, this decision is a financial one: the only 1080p television in this test costs £2,561 including VAT.

BIG ISSUE

The largest sets in this group test have a huge 37" screen, but with one exception they all have the same resolution as the 32" televisions. These big screens look really good only when you're sitting at least six feet away from them, so you wouldn't want one in a small living room. At a decent distance, though, our test DVDs and HD footage looked superb. We particularly liked the Philips screen, with its massive 1,920x1,080 resolution. We could see every pore in the actors' faces as they delivered their dialogue. If you have a smaller living room and have to sit closer to your TV, one of the 26" or 32" sets will give you a better experience.

POINTS OF VIEW

Another thing to watch out for is the quality of the LCD itself. A cheap LCD panel will have poor viewing angles, causing everything to appear dark or very reflective to anyone who is not facing the screen directly. A poor-quality screen may also have difficulty displaying a full range of colours, particularly in areas of bright light and dark shadow. This is annoying if you end up losing any details that are in shadows or shot at night. You can't tell the quality of a screen from its specifications

alone, so check out our reviews carefully to see which are up to scratch.

TUNE-IN, TURN ON

The TVs in this review all have built-in tuners: some analogue, some digital. The digital tuners all produced a far better picture than the analogue equivalents, and they can receive over 30 Freeview channels. They also provide digital Teletext, which is more versatile than normal Teletext, and a seven-day electronic programme guide (EPG). This allows you to check what's on TV for the coming week without having to buy a paper guide.

Surprisingly, the TVs with analogue tuners weren't much cheaper than those with digital Freeview tuners. The only reason to buy a set with an analogue tuner is that the screen is of such high quality, it makes the extra expense of investing in an external Freeview box worthwhile. Neither analogue nor digital terrestrial TV currently provides high-definition pictures. To watch HD TV, you need to connect a separate Sky or cable set-top box.

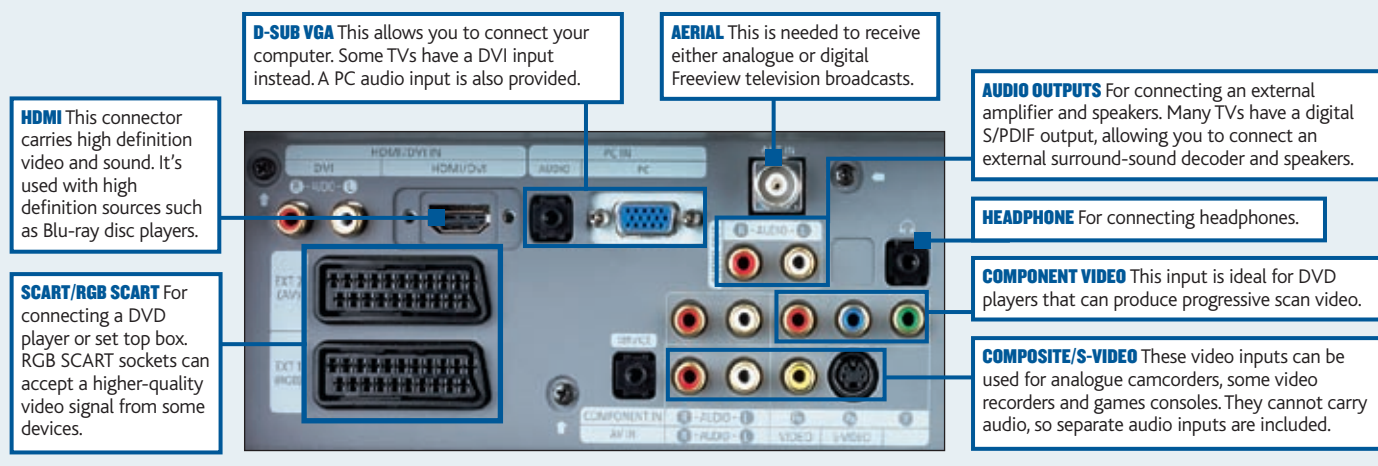
MAKING A CONNECTION

The diagram below shows all the connections you're likely to encounter on a good HDTV, but which ones do you need? If you want to connect a set-top box – such as a Sky+ or NTL box, for example – the TV you buy should have an RGB SCART input. If you use SCART to plug in your DVD player, you'll want an RGB SCART connector for that, too. But if you have a high-quality DVD player that can output a progressive scan picture, look for a component video connector.

To connect an HD TV source, such as an HD Sky box or a Blu-ray disc player, you need an HDMI input. These support the higher resolution of HD TV and the associated DRM (anti-piracy) technology known as HDCP. All the TV sets tested have such a connector. If they didn't, an HDCP-compatible DVI connector could be used for HD TV inputs, too.

To connect your PC, you need a DVI, VGA or HDMI input. Connecting to a TV with a DVI or VGA input is as simple as running a standard VGA or DVI cable between the PC and TV. If your chosen TV has only an HDMI input and your PC has a DVI output, you can buy a lead to connect the two for around £25 including VAT.

UNDERSTANDING TV CONNECTIONS





REVIEW 26" LCD TV

ACER
AT2601W

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £699 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.acer.co.ukDETAILS www.acer.co.uk

The AT2601W has only a 26" screen but it's fairly wide, with speakers placed on either side. It's not as stylish as its rivals, though, and has a rather plain design.

Annoyingly, all the Acer's sockets are placed on its underside. Connecting more than a couple of devices left an unsightly mess of cables sprouting from underneath the screen. Surprisingly, there is no component video input. The TV tuner worked without any problems, but it cannot receive digital Freeview stations. The picture quality was passable but unimpressive. We would prefer a Freeview tuner at this price.

Because there was no component input, we had to play our test DVD through the PC VGA input. Quality was adequate thanks to a proper 1:1 resolution of 1,280x768, but the image quality appeared a little soft and indistinct for our liking.

Moving on to HD material exaggerated the Acer's limitations. Regardless of whether we used the VGA or HDMI port, the picture lacked fine detail. Its colour balance was very good, with natural skin tones being a highlight, but the screen struggled to differentiate between black and dark grey areas. Its speakers provided a reasonable amount of bass and are loud, but our music tests tended to sound congested.



Cheap; decent computer display



No component input; unimpressive sound

SPECIFICATIONS 26" LCD TV, 1,280x768 resolution, HD ready, 1x HDMI, 1x VGA, 2x SCART, 1x composite, headphone, memory card reader

REVIEW 27" LCD TV

TOSHIBA
27WL56

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £699 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.empiredirect.co.ukDETAILS www.toshiba.com

Toshiba's 27" 27WL56 looks a bit plain, but we were keen to see whether its performance was as good as that of its huge 37" sibling.

The first letdown was the lack of a digital tuner. This is a real shame, because even with analogue broadcasts the Toshiba 27WL56's picture quality was crisp and clear. Another oversight is the lack of a component input; you'll need an adaptor if you want to connect a progressive scan DVD player.

Picture quality was very good. HD videos were presented with a good deal of detail, pure bright whites and strong contrast levels, but the 27WL56 fell short of its rivals with a slightly muted colour range. The picture provided wasn't as vibrant as that of the Sony or Samsung models.

Connecting a PC was easy via the HDMI or VGA inputs, but we couldn't get a 1:1 resolution where each pixel on the PC output was matched with one pixel on the screen. This left our computer desktop looking fuzzy. Setting the output to 1,280x720 resolution gave the best quality, but this lacked focus compared to the crisp output shown by the Samsung TV. Sound quality was great, though, with strong powerful bass and a decent volume range.

This is a good TV at a great price, but we'd recommend spending just £50 more on the superb Samsung model.



Crisp TV picture and good sound quality



No dedicated component video input; not a good PC display

SPECIFICATIONS 27" LCD TV, 1,280x768 resolution, HD ready, 1x HDMI, 1x VGA, 2x SCART, 1x component via VGA only, 1x S-Video, 1x composite, headphone

REVIEW 26" LCD TV

SAMSUNG
LE26R51BD

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £749 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.dixons.co.ukDETAILS www.samsung.co.uk

Samsung's 26" HD TV possesses stunning good looks and oozed quality from the moment we extricated it from its packaging.

The straightforward setup routine soon found all the available digital and analogue TV channels. TV broadcasts were slightly lacking in detail, but this was due to the digital picture processing, which did manage to rid the poor-quality TV signals of lots of noise. An excellent seven-day EPG makes it easy to find programmes to watch. The menu system is superbly intuitive and easy to navigate, and provides a comprehensive set of picture-tweaking options.

The Samsung LE26R51BD's true qualities shine through with DVDs and HD material. We were stunned by the sharp, vibrant images it produced, and our *Spider-Man 2* video oozed detail. HD movie clips were even more impressive; the Samsung LCD TV unearthed impressive amounts of fine detail with strong contrast and bright, realistic colours.

Connecting a PC via the VGA input proved easy, and with a brilliantly crisp 1,360x768 native resolution it looked great, too. Games showed no sign of blurring. The screen's superb picture quality made everything we put through it look truly stunning. The speakers are a bit disappointing, though. They produced a crisp treble, but were slightly lacking in bass. Still, for the money, the LE26R51BD provides incredible performance across the board.



Great picture when viewing TV, DVD and PC



Speakers lacking in bass

SPECIFICATIONS 26" LCD TV, 1,360x768 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, 1x VGA, 2x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite, headphone

REVIEW 26" LCD TV

SONY
KDL-S26A12U

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £999 inc VAT

SUPPLIER <http://shop.sonymstyle-europe.com>DETAILS www.sony.co.uk

The Sony KDL-S26A12U felt superbly sturdy from the moment we laid our hands on it. Surprisingly, it's heavier than some of the 32" TVs. Despite this weight, though, it possesses slim good looks.

The TV tuner can receive analogue and digital broadcasts, and all the channels were detected and correctly labelled automatically. The Sony produced a superb picture with both types of broadcasts. Freeview channels were displayed with impressive detail, although this did tend to highlight the pixelation and picture errors that sometimes occur in Freeview television. We were surprised that the HDMI and VGA inputs were placed on the sides of the TV, though. Despite our best efforts, the cables made the screen look messy.

The only image quality complaint was slightly muted contrast; otherwise, it was excellent. Colours were reproduced with incredible accuracy and detail was impressively retrieved from DVD and HD material. HD clips looked particularly vibrant. Using the Sony as a PC monitor is a joy, as its native resolution makes the most of widescreen-capable games. The Virtual Dolby surround sound did a superb job of spreading sound around the room, too.

Unfortunately, it's £250 more expensive than the Samsung LE26R51BD, which produced superior picture quality in most applications. It's a good screen, but even Samsung's 32" TV costs less.



Good picture and sound quality



A little expensive

SPECIFICATIONS 26" LCD TV, 1,366x768 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, 1x VGA, 2x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite, headphones



REVIEW 32" LCD TV

VIEWSONIC
N3260W

RATING ★★

PRICE £864 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.novatech.co.ukDETAILS www.viewsoniceurope.com/uk

ViewSonic's HD TV certainly looks swish, with its neat design and silver and black colour scheme, but its performance in other areas doesn't measure up.

The first oversight is the lack of a digital tuner. As analogue TV signals are broadcast in the 4:3 screen ratio, they can't take full advantage of the N3260W's 32" widescreen display. When connected to an outdoor aerial, the N3260W did produce a reasonable picture, albeit with some slight pixelation.

Further testing revealed more serious problems. Whether watching TV or material via the VGA or HDMI connections, colours were oversaturated and unreal-looking. Despite a range of adjustments within the awkward and sluggish onscreen menus, we couldn't get a natural, true image displayed.

In its favour, the ViewSonic N3260W did produce a true 1:1 display when connected to a PC at 1366x768 resolution. However, both HD video material and games failed to look their best due to the slightly uneven brightness and over-enthusiastic colours. Sound quality through the screen's stereo speakers was acceptable, if unremarkable by the standards of the group. The N3260W did at least produce enough volume to fill an average living room.

ViewSonic's N3260W may be the cheapest of the 32" sets, but it is limited by its uneven picture quality, poor menus and cheap-looking remote control. It is outperformed by its rivals.



Decent as a PC display



Generally poor image quality

SPECIFICATIONS 32" LCD TV, 1,366x768 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, 1x VGA, 2x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite, headphone

REVIEW 32" LCD TV

JVC
LT-32DS6

RATING ★★★

PRICE £998 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.empiredirect.co.ukDETAILS www.jvc.co.uk

JVC's HD TV has both analogue and digital TV tuners, and its setup routine quickly had us watching TV. Unfortunately, its picture quality soon put us off.

All channels were found successfully, but JVC's digital picture processing produced a smeary effect from our less-than-perfect signal. Turning the image-enhancing features down to their minimum settings helped, but also served to make the original broadcast's image defects more obvious. Both the Samsung and Panasonic TVs produce a better TV picture. The menu system is clearly labelled, but it soon became annoying and tiresome to navigate.

The picture quality was unimpressive across all the video inputs. DVDs looked acceptable, but were lacking in detail and contrast. Noticeable banding was evident in our colour wheel and greyscale test screens. Moving to HD sources only reinforced our impressions, with the JVC TV struggling to resolve as much detail as the competition. PC connectivity was little better, and we couldn't get a pixel-perfect screen via HDMI or VGA. Our Windows desktop was poorly reproduced. Sound quality was bland and lacking in detail, and the speakers became brash and tinny as we cranked them up to higher volumes.

As the second most expensive 32" set here, we expected better of the JVC LT-32DS6.



Simple to set up



Overzealous digital processing; dubious image quality

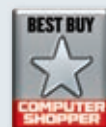
SPECIFICATIONS 32" LCD TV, 1,360x768 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, 1x VGA, 2x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite, headphone

REVIEW 32" LCD TV

SAMSUNG
LE32R41BD

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £931 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.empiredirect.co.ukDETAILS www.samsung.co.uk

The LE32R41BD is a gorgeous TV. Its glossy black bezel and nod to art deco design will make it look perfectly at home in the most stylish of living rooms. Thankfully, it has the abilities to match its stunning good looks.

From the moment we turned it on, this Samsung LCD TV oozed class. The straightforward menu system guided us through an automatic setup routine for finding both analogue and digital terrestrial TV stations. The picture quality for analogue and digital broadcasts was excellent, and the Samsung TV did an excellent job of masking the relatively poor video quality of today's TV broadcasts.

Getting the most out of the Samsung LE32R41BD's 32" panel is easy thanks to the comprehensive and clearly laid-out menu system. It even provides options for tweaking the colour balance to aid the colour blind.

Connecting our PC via its VGA connection produced a perfect Windows desktop at 1,360x768. Games and HD movie clips were bursting with detail, with not a hint of ghosting evident. Deep blacks and pure bright whites were allied to a superb colour balance. Our test DVD looked superb when connected via the TV's component input. Sound quality was excellent, and the stereo speakers provided good volume with a weighty, detailed sound.

This is a stunning TV at a reasonable price.



Easy to use with a PC; superb all-round quality



There may not be anything worth watching on TV

SPECIFICATIONS 32" LCD TV, 1,360x768 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, 1x VGA, 2x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite, headphone

REVIEW 32" LCD TV

PANASONIC
TX-32LXD52

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £1,025 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.121electricals.comDETAILS www.panasonic.co.uk

If the glossy, art deco style of the Samsung model is a bit too much for you, you'll love the demure matt exterior of the Panasonic TX-32LXD52.

Setting up the TX-32LXD52 was as easy as plugging it in and turning it on. An auto-search function quickly found all the available channels, and the digital TV tuner updated its software automatically. Picture quality was good, and the Panasonic's digital noise reduction circuitry did a superb job of smoothing out any image problems in digital TV broadcasts.

Image quality from DVD was excellent, with lots of detail even in the dark areas of the picture and realistic, vibrant colours. With HD material the Panasonic really shone, producing a crisp, natural image on a par with that of the Samsung TVs. Connecting a PC was less impressive, though. The only connection possible is via a DVI-to-HDMI adaptor, and then we could only get the Panasonic TV to display in a 1,088x612 resolution. This produced a disappointingly fuzzy Windows desktop. Panasonic's basic-looking but easily navigated menu system made optimising the display a cinch, though, and the speakers are both powerful and crisp-sounding.

This is a great TV, but not a great PC display, and the Samsung screen is better value.



Great image quality for TV and DVD



Not great for use with a PC

SPECIFICATIONS 32" LCD TV, 1,360x768 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, 3x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite



REVIEW 37" LCD TV

SHARP
LC37GA6E

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £1,408 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.empiredirect.co.ukDETAILS www.sharp.co.uk

Sharp's TV has an analogue tuner, but its picture quality wasn't quite as good as that of the Philips TV. Colours were a little less vibrant and not quite as crisp and bright. Fiddling with the contrast and colour settings corrected picture quality slightly, but the Philips TV produced a better picture from the same aerial. Sharp's menu system is also a bit fiddly, consisting of a strip along the top of the screen and old-fashioned drop-down menus that look like old-fashioned Teletext.

The LC37GA6E didn't do as well in our video tests as its rivals from Toshiba and Philips. When tested with our progressive scan DVD player, there was obvious jaggedness in lines that should have been straight. Details in the image weren't as sharp and bold as they should have been and bright colours didn't jump out of the screen the way we'd expect.

The screen was easy to use with our PC and easier to set up with a computer than the other 37" screens. We simply connected our PC and the TV with a VGA cable, rebooted the PC, and watched a pixel-perfect image appear. Our 3D gaming test was smooth and crisp with virtually no motion blur. For gaming, this screen is slightly better than even the Toshiba 37WLT58.

This is a reasonable 37" TV, but overall not as good as Toshiba's 37WLT58.



Cheap; good computer display



Video image quality not perfect

SPECIFICATIONS 37" LCD TV, 1,366x768 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, VGA, 2x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite

REVIEW 37" LCD TV

TOSHIBA
37WLT58

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £1,654 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.empiredirect.co.ukDETAILS www.toshiba.com

Toshiba's 37WLT58 is the only television in the 37" group that has a Freeview digital tuner. Picture quality from a TV signal was far superior to the analogue TV reception on the other two sets. It also has an analogue tuner, and you can switch between the two at the touch of a button. This is great if you're waiting for Freeview to be switched on in your area.

Picture quality from HD TV footage and our progressive scan DVD was perfect. Every edge, line and detail was picked out flawlessly. Colours were bright but not oversaturated and a wide range of tones were reproduced well: blacks looked black, and detail was visible even in dark areas of the picture.

Connecting to a PC is easy and the results look decent. You could certainly use it with a Media Center PC. Our 3D game test was displayed clearly, even when moving very fast, and the sound quality is great. It doesn't sound quite as good as the Philips TV, but it's still loud and punchy without being bass-heavy. The 37WLT58 has an unprecedented three SCART sockets, two of which are RGB; perfect if you want to connect a DVD player and a Sky set-top box.

The 37WLT58 produces good video and sound, has a Freeview tuner, plenty of connectors and costs less than two grand. If you want a massive high-definition TV, it's a bargain.



Great picture quality; loads of connectors



High-definition picture quality not as accomplished as the Philips TV's

SPECIFICATIONS 37" LCD TV, 1,366x768 resolution, HD Ready, 2x HDMI, 1x VGA 3x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite, headphone

REVIEW 37" LCD TV

PHILIPS
37PF9830

RATING ★★★★★

PRICE £2,561 inc VAT

SUPPLIER www.empiredirect.co.ukDETAILS www.consumer.philips.com

This is the only set in the group to support a true 1,080-line resolution, and this makes a big difference to its picture quality. HD TV video footage was superbly rendered, although we had to stand a few feet back to get the proper effect. Detail was picked out perfectly, with every line and edge rendered clearly. The colours were natural and the screen was very bright. The picture from a progressive scan DVD player was particularly impressive. Like all the screens in this test, it displayed straight lines as slightly jagged when expanding this 576p signal to fit the screen. When we turned on Philip's PixelPlus 2 image enhancement setting, however, detail and motion became much smoother and cleaner. The sound quality was good, too, with plenty of volume and detail.

It's a shame there's no Freeview tuner, but TV quality was great, producing a richer, higher contrast and brighter picture than the Sharp TV. However, it fared less well when plugged into a PC. The highest resolution it could display was 1,024x768. At any other resolution the picture was blurry and flickered, as if it were at the wrong refresh rate. We've never seen a TV with so many connectors, though. As well as the normal AV connectors, it has USB ports, a memory card reader and an Ethernet port for sending video files over a network.

This isn't a good screen for Media Center use, but it's the best TV we've seen. Then again, at this price it should be.



Superlative high-definition picture; excellent image processing



Low resolution with a PC; expensive

SPECIFICATIONS 37" LCD TV, 1,920x1,080 resolution, HD Ready, 1x HDMI, 1x DVI, 3x SCART, 1x component, 1x S-video, 1x composite, Ethernet, headphones, 2x USB, memory card reader

HOW WE TESTED

To find the perfect display for PC and TV, we ran every screen through two waves of tests. First, we tested each TV in the same way as we would an LCD monitor, looking for accurate fine detail and natural colours. We ran our monitor tests and checked for any problems with viewing angles, brightness or uneven illumination. With the screens still connected to a PC, we ran several high-definition video files to compare the detail, rendering of colour and smoothness of motion.

To assess the quality of the built-in TV tuners, we plugged every TV into the same aerial and tuned it several times. We were looking for a good, clear picture with well-resolved detail and no artefacts or ghosting. We tested video playback quality using a progressive scan DVD player. We also used our test DVD to judge sound quality, as it has a heavy-rock soundtrack and lots of sound effects. We increased the volume in small increments, listening to the range of sounds produced and any distortion.

You shouldn't need a degree in engineering to use your TV, so we also looked at how easy they were to set up and use. We concentrated on their menu systems and the design and layout of the remote control.

Finally, we looked at each TV's connectors. If you're spending this much on a TV it should do everything, so we looked for enough connectors to wire up a set-top box, a DVD player, a surround sound decoder and a computer.



We tested video display quality using a progressive scan DVD player and a copy of *Spider-Man 2*



MANUFACTURER	ACER	TOSHIBA	SAMSUNG	SONY	VIEWSONIC	SAMSUNG
Model	AT2601W	27WL56	LE26R51BD	KDL-S26A12U	N3260W	LE32R41BD
Overall rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
TV rating	★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★
Video rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★
PC rating	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★
Sound rating	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★
Connectivity rating	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
PHYSICAL						
Viewable size	26"	27"	26"	26"	32"	32"
Native resolution	1,280x768	1,280x768	1,360x768	1,366x768	1,366x768	1,360x768
Aspect ratio	16:9	16:9	16:9	16:9	16:9	16:9
HD Ready	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p
Contrast ratio	600:1	900:1	800:1	1000:1	800:1	800:1
Brightness (cd/m ²)	450	500	500	500	500	500
Speakers	Virtual surround	Virtual surround	Virtual surround	Virtual surround	Stereo	Virtual surround
Bezel (top/side/bottom)	50mm/40mm/110mm	40mm/40mm/110mm	45mm/45mm/105mm	40mm/40mm/105mm	70mm/60mm/130mm	50mm/50mm/110mm
Screen depth	110mm	100mm	100mm	100mm	110mm	85mm
Integrated power supply	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Screen elevation	185mm	175mm	185mm	165mm	190mm	150mm
Stand WxD	290x280mm	290x280mm	390x310mm	380x310mm	400x250mm	500x180mm
CONNECTORS						
DVI	0	0	0	0	0	0
VGA	1	1	1	1	1	1
HDMI	1	1	1	1	1	1
Component	No	Via VGA	1	1	1	1
SCART (RGB)	2 (2)	2 (1)	2 (1)	2 (2)	2 (2)	2 (1)
Audio outputs	Two phono, optical S/PDIF, headphone	Headphone	Two phono, headphone	Two phono, headphone	Two phono, headphone	Two phono, headphone
Other	Composite, 6-in-1 card reader (CompactFlash, Memory Stick, Micro-drive, MMC, Secure Digital, Smart Media)	S-video, composite	S-video, composite	S-video, composite	S-video, composite	S-video, composite
TUNER						
Technology	Analogue	Analogue	Freeview/Analogue	Freeview/Analogue	Analogue	Freeview/Analogue
EPG	N/A	N/A	Seven-day	Seven-day	N/A	Seven-day
Teletext	Analogue	Analogue	Digital	Digital	Analogue	Digital
ENVIRONMENTAL						
Normal consumption	150W	130W	140W	81W	190W	184W
Suspend consumption	5W	1W	1.2W	0.5W	5W	1W
BUYING INFORMATION						
Warranty	Two years	One year	One year	One year	Two years	One year
Price ex VAT	£595	£595	£637	£850	£735	£792
Price inc VAT	£699	£699	£749	£999	£864	£931
Contact	Acer	Empire Direct	Dixons	Sony Shop	Novatech	Empire Direct
Phone	08708 531005	08701 201122	08458 500545	020 7365 2947	0870 112 0612	08701 201122
Supplier	www.acer.co.uk	www.empiredirect.co.uk	www.dixons.co.uk	shop.sonystyle-europe.com	www.novatech.co.uk	www.empiredirect.co.uk
Details	www.acer.co.uk	www.toshiba.com	www.samsung.com/uk	www.sony.co.uk	www.viewsoniceurope.com/uk	www.samsung.co.uk
Part code	AT2601W-CR	27WL56	LE26R51BD	KDL-S26A12U	N3260W	LE32R41BDX

MANUFACTURER	JVC	PANASONIC	SHARP	TOSHIBA	PHILIPS
Model	LT-32DS6	TX-32LXD52	LC37GA6E	37WLT58	37PF9830
Overall rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★★★
TV rating	★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★
Video rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★
PC rating	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★	★★
Sound rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★
Connectivity rating	★★★★	★★★★	★★	★★★★	★★★★
PHYSICAL					
Viewable size	32"	32"	37"	37"	37"
Native resolution	1,360x768	1,360x768	1,366x768	1,366x768	1,920x1,080
Aspect ratio	16:9	16:9	16:9	16:9	16:9
HD Ready	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p and 1080i	Yes, 720p, 1080i and 1080p
Contrast ratio	1,000:1	800:1	800:1	800:1	800:1
Brightness (cd/m ²)	500	500	450	500	600
Speakers	Stereo	Stereo	Virtual surround	Virtual surround	Virtual surround
Bezel (top/side/bottom)	40mm/40mm/105mm	50mm/47mm/130mm	50mm/50mm/105mm	50mm/50mm/100mm	80mm/100mm/140mm
Screen depth	110mm	80mm	110mm	110mm	100mm
Integrated power supply	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Screen elevation	170mm	195mm	170mm	160mm	220mm
Stand WxD	500x300mm	510x250mm	670x320mm	370x295mm	820x260mm
CONNECTORS					
DVI	0	0	0	0	1
VGA	1	0	1	1	0
HDMI	1	1	1	2	1
Component	1	1	1	1	1
SCART (RGB)	2 (2)	3 (2)	2 (1)	3 (2)	3 (2)
Audio outputs	Two phono, headphone	Three phono	Two phono	Four phono, headphone	Three phono, Two coaxial S/PDIF, headphone
Other	S-video, composite	S-video, composite	S-video, composite	S-video, composite	S-video, composite, 2x USB, Ethernet, card reader (MMC, Memory Stick, Micro-drive, CompactFlash, Secure Digital, Smart Media), Ambilight
TUNER					
Technology	Freeview/Analogue	Freeview/Analogue	Analogue	Freeview/Analogue	Analogue
EPG	Seven-day	Seven-day	N/A	Seven-day	N/A
Teletext	Digital	Digital	Analogue	Digital	Analogue
ENVIRONMENTAL					
Normal consumption	152W	133W	162W	130W	221W
Suspend consumption	2.6W	0.4W	2W	1W	1W
BUYING INFORMATION					
Warranty	One year	One year	One year	One year	One year
Price ex VAT	£849	£872	£1,198	£1,408	£2,180
Price inc VAT	£998	£1,025	£1,408	£1,654	£2,561
Contact	Empire Direct	121 Electricals	Empire Direct	Empire Direct	Empire Direct
Phone	08701 201122	08712 002027	08701 201122	08701 201122	08701 201122
Supplier	www.empiredirect.co.uk	www.121electricals.com	www.empiredirect.co.uk	www.empiredirect.co.uk	www.empiredirect.co.uk
Details	www.jvc.co.uk	www.panasonic.co.uk	www.sharp.co.uk	www.toshiba.com	www.consumer.philips.com
Part code	LT32DS6	TX-32LXD52	LC37GA6E	37WLT58	37PF9830

LABS VERDICT

LCD TVs

If you're under the impression that any HD TV marked HD Ready is as good as any another, then you're wrong. We were stunned at the differences in quality between the sets on test. But our tests also proved that splashing out on the most expensive set isn't the best way to get a perfect display for PC and TV, either.

The three huge 37" LCD TVs dwarfed other displays in our lab. The Philips 37PF9830 in particular left us wishing we had a bigger lounge and a deeper overdraft facility. The considerable talents of the Philips LCD TV will cost you, though. If the thought of spending more than two-and-a-half grand on a TV has left you feeling faint, take heart; there are cheaper options. For £900 less, you can buy the Toshiba 37WLT58, which has a similarly gigantic 37" screen and possesses superlative picture quality, a Freeview tuner and demure, subtle looks. It deservedly receives a Best Buy award.

In the 26" and 32" LCD TV groups, the two victors are from the same manufacturer: Samsung. Both offer incredible picture quality, impressive PC connectivity, a wide range of inputs, analogue and digital TV tuners, and cost under a grand. The 32" LE32R41BD is big enough for all but the most sizable of lounges and, at £931 including VAT, it's not too pricy, either. It also wins a Best Buy award. The real star of the show is the 26" LE26R51BD, which offers the best value at just £750 including VAT. It has all its big brother's talents; the only difference is its slightly smaller screen. This LCD TV wins a Best Budget Buy award. **CS**

26-27" LCD TVs

SAMSUNG
LE26R51BD



32" LCD TVs

SAMSUNG
LE32R41BD



37" LCD TVs

TOSHIBA
37WLT58



PHILIPS
37PF9830

